

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 26-27 are pending. Claims 7-25 are canceled. By this Amendment, claims 1-6 are amended and new claims 26-27 are added. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

I. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hattori (U.S. Patent No. 6,034,718) in view of Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,522,789). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

In particular, neither Hattori nor Takahashi, individually or in combination, discloses or suggests an optical fiber observing image processing apparatus for an optical fiber fusion-splicer in which positioning of optical axes and end faces of optical fibers can be automatically controlled by capturing and processing image data of the optical fibers photo-taken by television cameras from plural directions, wherein two or more different capturing modes regarding the capturing of the image data, and said capturing modes can automatically be switched in synchronous with or independently from progress of the image processing to position the optical axes and end faces of optical fibers, as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claim 5.

The Office Action at page 2 admits that Hattori does not disclose the above-noted features. However, the Office Action asserts that Takahashi discloses this feature. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Takahashi discloses in Figs. 11A and at col. 10, lines 50-64 a stereo endoscope 20A that starts with objective lenses 3a and 3b, and ends with CCDs 2a and 2b. The CCDs 2a and 2b are arranged in a row and stereo visualization of images can be obtained from the CCDs. However, when only one of the CCDs 2a and 2b is used, Takahashi's stereo endoscope is not

fully functional. In fact, a stereo image is not created when only one CCD is used. Therefore, there would have been no motivation in Takahashi to use only one CCD.

On the contrary, claim 1 recites an optical fiber observing image processing apparatus for the optical fiber fusion-splicer in which positioning of optical axes and end faces of optical fibers can be automatically controlled by capturing and processing image data of the optical fibers photo-taken by television cameras from plural directions. However, the applied references do not disclose that the optical fibers can be observed from plural directions and the cameras may be arranged almost vertically to the optical fiber's longitudinal direction (i.e., the optical axis's direction).

Furthermore, the applied references fail to disclose an observation of the optical fibers using images obtained by a single camera provides meaningful images. Takahashi's stereo endoscope does not provide meaningful images when only one CCD is used. Thus, Takahashi does not disclose or suggest capturing and processing image data of the optical fibers photo-taken by television cameras from plural directions, wherein two or more different capturing modes regarding the capturing of the image data, and said capturing modes can automatically be switched in synchronous with or independently from progress of the image processing to position the optical axes and end faces of optical fibers, as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claim 5.

Therefore, independent claims 1 and 5 define patentable subject matter. Claims 2-4 and 6 depend from the respective independent claims 1 and 5, and therefore also define patentable subject matter. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

Furthermore, claims 26-27 are also allowable by virtue of their dependency on independent claim 1.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-6 and 26-27 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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Attachment:

Petition for Extension of Time

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